GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4466
ANSWERED ON:22.08.2001
DEFACING OF MEA WEBSITE
VSM (RETD.) COL. CHOUDHARY

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Pakistani hacker group had defaced MEA website as reported in the Hindustan Times dated May 8, 2001;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein; and

(c) the counter measures proposed to be taken to prevent the recurrence of such incidents?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH)

(a) &(b) The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) website http://www.indiagov.org was hacked on the night of 5-6 May 2001.The site was immediately shut down on May 6, 2001. The site was hacked by a pro-Pakistan group called `Hackactivist GFORCE`. The hackers defaced the home page with graffiti and also left a threat that all major Indian official websites would be `manned` by the `GFORCE` in a few weeks time.

(c) It was imperative that the website was made properly secure before it was restarted. Following discussions by the Ministry of External Affairs with the Ministry of Information Technology and the National Informatics Centre (NIC), it was agreed that MEA`s website be hosted in NIC premises within their `secure zone` behind the NIC `firewall` which is designed to prevent hacking.The web server was shifted to the NIC on May 24, 2001 and is now fully operational with the address http://www.meadev.nic.in.

NIC has established a secured zone for providing security for all Government sites being hosted in their premises.All the technology options available in the market for cyber security are in place. Continuous monitoring and updation of security software is done on a regular and proactive basis.